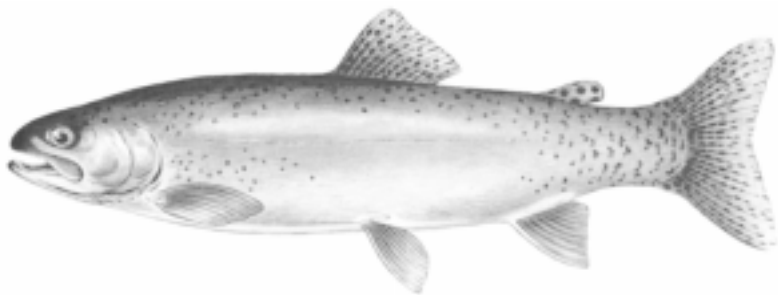


## EAGLE LAKE RAINBOW TROUT

*Salmo gairdnerii aquilarum*



### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

*Male at spawning time:* In describing the Eagle Lake trout, J. O. Snyder stated: "Body above and down the sides nearly to the lateral line is a rich dark olive, each scale brassy and very conspicuous. The sides below the olive region and the ventral surface are deep coppery-red with bright metallic reflections. The sides of the head are cherry-red, very rich in color. A trace of red beneath the mandible; iris brassy. The pectorals are broadly and conspicuously edged with olive."

There are very few black spots on the head. The middle of the back from the head to the dorsal fin is without spots. The dorsal and caudal fins and the upper part of the body have large rounded or elongated spots.

*Female at spawning time:* (Again, from description by Snyder.) "It is light olive above where each scale is silvery with greenish reflections. The sides are lighter, the scales more green than those above, the ventral surface silvery, tinted with pink. A very distinct pale reddish stripe extends along the side of the body, mostly below the lateral line. The cheeks and opercles are red, the iris orange. The ventrals and anal are suffused with red and distinctly edged with the same."

### DISTRIBUTION IN CALIFORNIA

Originally this trout occurred only in Eagle Lake, Lassen County, and its tributary, Pine Creek. In recent years it has been transplanted to several waters in Lassen and Modoc counties.

### INTERESTING FACTS

Eagle Lake lies within the Lahontan system, a drainage area of the Great Basin of North America with a number of fishes of unusual interest. However, the lake and its tributary, Pine Creek, are only a few miles distant from the Sacramento River drainage and there has been considerable speculation whether the Eagle Lake trout is more closely related to the cutthroats

barriers which prevent adult fish from reaching the spawning areas. Even when no such barriers exist, they rarely ascend to the headwaters, where the nonmigratory rainbow is commonly found.

### INTERESTING FACTS

The steelhead and the golden trout are the two most glamorous trout in California. The golden is known for its beauty and the steelhead for its quality as a game fish. Anyone who has taken a fresh-run steelhead on a fly and light tackle will never forget the experience.

A great many young steelhead are caught in fresh water before they have migrated downstream to the sea. These fish are commonly less than eight inches long and, of course, are not able to put up much of a battle. They usually enter the ocean when they are one or two years old and then spend from one to three years in the sea. When they come back to spawn they nearly always return to the stream in which they were hatched. At that time they may weigh from two to twelve pounds or more.

During the winter or early spring the spawning fish reach suitable gravel riffles in the upper sections of streams and dig their nests.

This trout was described by Sir John Richardson from individuals caught near the mouth of the Columbia River in 1836 and was named for Dr. Meredith Gairdner, a naturalist in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company.



*The beautiful Smith River in Del Norte County is California's most northerly steelhead stream.*